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We were ready at last to start on our perilous journey. I therefore commanded the chief guide to arrange men and animals in single file at twelve feet distances, and to lash them all together. He at once put up a strong objection pointing out that the first five miles was over perfectly flat country; but if I were to be boss of this expedition I intended to be boss so put my foot down, and as it happened stepped on 'Rags', I insisted on my orders being carried out. Experience and study had taught me that many serious accidents had happened to St. John's alpinists through proper precautions not being taken.

The total length of the cortege was 3122 feet; every man but Baker and myself was on foot and we took up our position in rear so that if any danger was to be met we would surely meet it in time. I also took the precaution to have Baker and myself tied to five guides each. Our batmen carried our ice axes and alpenstocks while we were mounted on small donkeys, and it is here I made a miscalculation owing to the fact that the ears of these animals severely restricted our view of the front.

It was decided at the last moment to make the ascent in evening dress in honour of the many ladies who had ventured out to see our start.

At fifteen minutes past four I gave the signal to advance and promptly at 4.30 a start was made amidst resounding cheers from the throng at the Windsor. It remains in my memory the heart rending partings between the drivers and their lady friends and I did all in my power by keeping a magnificent saddle on my donkey to assure these dear creatures that the party was in good hands.

We watered the caravan at the Richelieu and presently left civilisation behind, and just beyond the Village named after the Mountain we were to ascend we camped on an inviting stretch of meadow, pitched our tents supped and established a strong guard for the night. It was at this stage that a special rider was sent back to St. Johns for a corkscrew.

After a sleepless night all was alive at two in the morning and a peep out into the starry heavens revealed the majestic peak of Mount Johnson towering above us, draped in a sable pall of clouds. The chief guide advised delaying our start as he feared rain but I felt that he was wrong and again stood my ground, this time knocking over the oil stove.

A hurried breakfast allowed us to start at nine. Our course led up

some terrific slopes thickly wooded and to add to our discomfiture we were continually meeting parties of tourists returning and being overtaken by parties unwisely making the ascent without sufficient precautions. It was with no avail that I entreated them to abandon the idea.

Things were going tolerably well when at 3.05 p.m. the seventeen guides called a halt and after consultation admitted we were lost, and to my utter amazement none of them had ever been on the Mountain before. It was here I made a momentous decision in spite of the ugly turn things had taken and against the advice of the guides.

As this is a chronicle of the happenings on this eventful trip a peep into the future is out of place. I ordered the lead of the string of paraphernalia and men to proceed in a circuitous spiral manner hoping that as we neared the top the rear of our line would be just in front of the lead at a point where the circumference would be exactly 3122 feet.

Long before my object had been attained night fell and the party disrobed and camped where they stood, food being passed along the line from hand to hand. The drivers in the lead complained that they received no sustenance, but I am inclined to believe they rather exaggerated things.

There were evident signs of dismay and despair throughout the party, but with an assurance from me in the shape of a bulletin passed along the line above my signature to the effect that 'nil desperandum' so why should they' their mutterings ceased.

(To be continued.)

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